



# A FERTILE SOIL FOR THE WORD

by Fr. Cian Marquez, SSP

People worry too much: what to eat, drink, wear, whether they will be successful in love or land a job; whether the world will end soon. They forget that God will help them bear with problems, big or small, if only they have enough trust. The second factor is just the opposite: We might think that if a person has enough riches and live a comfortable life, he will be more tranquil. But wealth has the power to ensnare people to desire for more—until it becomes an obsession. Mammon is the idol that replaces the true God in the heart of the poor fellow.

Only the person who hears the Word and understands it becomes the “rich soil” that enables the seed to reach its maturation—“first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear” (Mk 4:28). Listening to the Word and acting on it are the mark of a true disciple. Jesus proclaims, “Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solid on rock” (Mt 7:24–25).

What kind of soil are we? Does the Gospel ever have a chance to become a tree in us and eventually bear fruits? I

The Word that we bear is alive, but it will only remain so if we allow it to be planted in our hearts.

As he gathers a cluster of ripening tomatoes, the boy asks his father, “Do all these tomatoes really come from a single seed?” “Yes,” the father answers. “Wow! It’s a miracle,” the child exclaims. “No, it’s not. It is just the way it is,” is the Father’s final reply.

Some people have lost their sense of wonder. They have ceased to marvel at the workings of nature, to admire the beauty of a seed sprouting to become a plant or a tree heavy with fruits. They say, “There’s nothing extraordinary to it. It happens everyday. Each seed is programmed to do just that.”

The Gospel Reading today has a lesson on this regard. The Word of God that we hear Sunday after Sunday at Mass, or encounter during our *Lectio Divina*, has the innate power to sprout, to become a tree, and bear fruits. The Word of the Lord is alive and will grow by itself.

But just as the seed needs good soil to grow, mature, and bear fruit, the Word also needs “the fertile ground” of

the soul, that is the welcoming disposition of our hearts and minds. Some people turn out to be “footpaths” by the way they live. The seed of the Word is not given a chance to remain and take root because they simply do not care. They believe spirituality is not for them.

Some hearts are “rocky.” The seed cannot sink its roots to the ground. The rocky soil cannot hold water to nourish the seed. People of this type, says Jesus, are enthusiastic at best. They have nice feelings about the Word of God and about spiritual things. But they cannot bear to be “pruned” that they may bear fruits. They do not have perseverance. When tribulations or persecution come, they fall away. They complain, “Why do bad things happen to us when we have dedicated ourselves to God?”

The third kind of soil is “thorny.” The thorns choke the fragile plant and so it dies or becomes stunted. Jesus tells us about two factors that choke the plant. First is worldly anxiety.

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

### Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 17 [16]:15)

*(Recited when there is no opening song.)*

**As for me, in justice I shall behold your face; I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.**

### Greeting

*(The sign of the cross is made here.)*

**P**—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**All — And with your spirit.**

### Introduction

*(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)*

**P**—The Gospel parable of the Sower reminds us that for God's Word to yield a good harvest in our lives, we must prepare the soil by receiving the Word with our hearts and minds and by heeding its call to action. In this Eucharist, let us ask the Lord for the courage to think, decide, and act according to the Gospel.

### Penitential Rite

**P**—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

**P**—You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

**All—Lord, have mercy.**

**P**—You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

**All—Christ, have mercy.**

**P**—You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

**All—Lord, have mercy.**

**P**—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**All—Amen.**

### Gloria

**All—Glory to God in the**

**highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### Collect

**P**—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray, so that they may return to the right path, give all who for the faith they profess are accounted Christians the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ and to strive after all that does it honor.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

**All—Amen.**

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



### First Reading (Is 55:10–11) *(Sit)*

*Just as the rain and snow make the earth fruitful, God's word goes forth from his mouth to enrich us. But as the parable in the Gospel teaches, we need to provide a good soil for God's word.*

### A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

THUS says the LORD: Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed

to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; my word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.

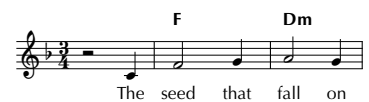
—The word of the Lord.

**All—Thanks be to God.**

### Responsorial Psalm (Ps 65)

**R—The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.**

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**1.** You have visited the land and watered it;/ greatly have you enriched it./ God's watercourses are filled;/ you have prepared the grain. **(R)**

**2.** Thus have you prepared the land: drenching its furrows,/ breaking up its clods,/ softening it with showers,/ blessing its yield. **(R)**

**3.** You have crowned the year with your bounty,/ and your paths overflow with a rich harvest;/ the untilled meadows overflow with it,/ and rejoicing clothes the hills. **(R)**

**4.** The fields are garmented with flocks/ and the valleys blanketed with grain./ They shout and sing for joy. **(R)**

### Second Reading

(Rom 8:18–23)

*Jesus' disciples are subject to suffering and persecution. But Jesus' resurrection, the firstfruits of the Spirit, holds the promise of incomparable glory and final redemption.*

### A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS:**

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

—The word of the Lord.  
**All—Thanks be to God.**

**Alleluia** (*Stand*)

**All—Alleluia, alleluia. The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower. All who come to him will have life forever. Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel** (Mt 13:1–9) (*Short form*)

**P**—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew  
**All—Glory to you, O Lord.**

ON THAT DAY, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

—The Gospel of the Lord.

**All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Homily** (*Sit*)

**Profession of Faith** (*Stand*)

**All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*At the words that follow up to and including and became man, all bow.*) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**Prayer of the Faithful**

**P**—Let us pray to the Father, that, through his Son, we may be not just listeners but doers of the word. We pray:

**R—Loving God, hear us.**

**C**—That we may have recourse to your Word in order to be

trained in holiness and be equipped for every good work, we pray: **(R)**

**C**—That those in public service may derive strength and inspiration from your Word and follow his example in serving the people, we pray: **(R)**

**C**—That those who are severely tried by suffering and anxiety, those who are tempted by the values of the world, and those who grow cold in faith, may hold on to your Word for courage and consolation, we pray: **(R)**

**C**—May you welcome in your loving embrace and peace those who are dying today and all the souls who are in need most of your mercy. We pray: **(R)**

**C**—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

**P**—Let the Word, heavenly Father, sink deep and take root in our hearts, so that we may know your will and follow the path you mark out for a yield of a hundredfold.

Through Christ our Lord.  
**All—Amen.**



**Presentation of the Gifts** (*Stand*)

**P**—Pray, brethren...

**All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

**Prayer over the Offerings**

**P**—Look upon the offerings of the Church, O Lord, as she makes her prayer to you, and grant that, when consumed by those who believe, they may bring ever greater holiness.

Through Christ our Lord.  
**All—Amen.**



**Preface** (*Ordinary Time IV*)

**P**—The Lord be with you.

**All**—And with your spirit.

**P**—Lift up your hearts.

**All**—We lift them up to the Lord.

**P**—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All**—It is right and just.

**P**—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For by his birth he brought renewal to humanity's fallen state, and by his suffering, canceled out our sins; by his rising from the dead he has opened the way to eternal life, and by ascending to you, O Father, he has unlocked the gates of heaven.

And so, with the company of Angels and Saints, we sing the hymn of your praise, as without end we acclaim:

**All**—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (*Kneel*)

**Acclamation** (*Stand*)

**All**—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

**THE COMMUNION RITE**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**All**—Our Father...

**P**—Deliver us, Lord...

**All**—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

**Invitation to Peace**

**Invitation to Communion**  
(*Kneel*)

**P**—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

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**All**—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

**Communion Antiphon**  
(*In 6:57*)

**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.**

**Prayer after Communion**  
(*Stand*)

**P**—Let us pray. (*Pause*)

Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord, that, by our participation in this mystery, its saving effects upon us may grow.

Through Christ our Lord.  
**All**—Amen.

**THE CONCLUDING RITES**

**P**—The Lord be with you.

**All**—And with your spirit.

**Solemn Blessing**

**P**—Bow down for the blessing.  
(*Pause*)

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

**All**—Amen.

**P**—May he let his face shine upon you and show you his mercy.

**All**—Amen.

**P**—May he turn his countenance towards you and give you his peace.

**All**—Amen.

**P**—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

**All**—Amen.

**Dismissal**

**P**—The Mass has been offered. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

**All**—Thanks be to God.

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